

Lakewood, CA - Congresswoman Linda Sánchez recently visited AltaMed as part of National Latino AIDS Awareness Day (NLAAD), a national campaign to increase awareness of HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment within the Latino community.

AltaMed organized the AIDS Awareness Walk Around the Block event in downtown Los Angeles on October 15, supporting efforts to promote HIV testing and education among Latinos and mobilizing Latino communities in the fight against AIDS.

This year's NLAAD theme was "Knowledge is Power. Get the Facts. Get Tested for HIV." More than 350 institutions in 250 cities across the United States, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands participated in NLAAD on the last day of Hispanic Heritage Month.

"It is critical that we take a stand against the spread of HIV as Latinos continue to be disproportionately affected by this disease," said Congresswoman Sánchez.

Congresswoman Sánchez was an original cosponsor of a Congressional resolution recognizing the observance of National Latino AIDS Awareness Day. She was also a cosponsor of the Responsible Education about Life Act, which would make grants available to states for family life education, including education on abstinence and contraception, to prevent teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

Latinos comprise nearly 20% of HIV/AIDS cases nationwide but only represent 14% of the national population. NLAAD promotes the critical role of HIV testing and prevention education in stemming the spread of AIDS.

"National Latino AIDS Awareness Day is a day to enjoin Latinos, regardless of country of origin, in a national Latino movement to confront the stigmas associated with the disease and prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in our communities," said Dennis de Leon, President of the Latino Commission of AIDS. "We must empower our communities by educating ourselves and promoting the importance of knowing your HIV status. Through extensive education, training, and testing sites in Latino communities across the country, Latinos are taking a stand against the spread of HIV, as well as celebrating our culture and the preservation of life and hope."